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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

REF: (A) bSTATE 118920, (B) STATE 123982

¶1. (U) Summary: December 10 marks the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This day, celebrated as Human Rights Day worldwide, is the date that the UDHR was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The Department is celebrating the occasion with a ceremony hosted by Secretary Rice on December 8th - kicking off Human Rights Week - at which she will honor this year's recipients of three Department and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) awards. The Department encourages all posts, in keeping with the spirit of Human Rights Week, to pursue all appropriate outreach activities to advance human rights and democracy objectives. See ACTION, Para 12. End Summary.

DC Efforts:

¶2. The Department is marking the occasion with a ceremony on December 8th hosted by Secretary Rice where she will present three Departmental and DRL awards (Reftel).

- ¶A. Diplomacy for Freedom Award
- ¶B. Freedom Defender Award
- ¶C. Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award

¶3. A cable with details about each award and its recipient will be sent septel following the Secretary's presentation of the awards.

¶4. During Human Rights Week, INFOCENTRAL and the Department's Dipnote Blog will feature items on the UDHR as well as on countries and issues relevant to the work of the award winners.

¶5. IIP has prepared a number of resources to support Posts in commemorating Human Rights Day. America.gov's "In Focus" topic for November is Human Rights. Features will include photo galleries on the UDHR and quizzes. IIP's November eJournal USA, available on America.gov and INFOCENTRAL, will discuss the history and modern day application of the UDHR. For further details, see reftel.

¶6. IIP will also offer global webchat programs. On December 10, there will be a Human Rights Day webchat for global audiences, with time and speaker TBD. On December 11, in the IIP weekly Global Forum webchat program slot, audiences can join an open discussion on human rights moderated by an IIP expert starting at 08:00 EST, and at 09:00 EST, audiences can enter into dialog with an outside expert, TBD. Post can encourage their audiences to participate by going to the program URL. No registration is needed. Guests simply choose "Enter as a Guest," type in their preferred screen names, and join the discussion.

¶7. Information Resource Centers are also available to support Posts' efforts, for example, by sending out a webliography, bibliography or newsletter product with materials on human rights; distributing to contacts the Department's materials, including the Human Rights report; and, creating a special website page with links to the Department and other significant information on human rights; supporting PAS programs with DVCs, movie screenings, or speakers.

¶8. A collection of the resources listed above as well as guidance and other internal-use and public resources will be available on INFOCENTRAL's International Events Calendar (click on December 10). To find it, go to <https://infocentral.state.gov> and look for the calendar icon on the right side of the home page.

Post Action:

¶9. Human Rights Day provides an opportunity to highlight the leading role of the United States in promoting and protecting human rights.

¶10. In countries where human rights and democratic principles are challenged, posts are encouraged to reach out to human rights activists and advocates and demonstrate solidarity with them; and may, at their discretion, also coordinate activities with diplomatic representations of other countries signatory to the UDHR, appropriate UN offices, and NGOs. In countries where citizens enjoy liberty, posts are encouraged to work in cooperation with a combination of any or all of the following: host governments, diplomatic representations of other countries signatory to the UDHR, appropriate UN offices, and NGOs to spotlight human rights concerns around the world.

¶11. Posts also are encouraged to schedule media and other public outreach events as appropriate to highlight Human Rights Week themes.

¶12. ACTION REQUESTED: The National Security Council has asked for brief descriptions from Posts of your planned outreach activities to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR. Please email Erin Hart in IIP with the subject line: "Post Outreach Activities - (XPost NameX) by December 4. Negative responses need not be reported.

¶13. Suggested Public Diplomacy efforts include:

¶A. Ambassador press/television/radio interviews to highlight the new initiatives;

¶B. Distribution of Secretary's remarks to key governmental and non-governmental contacts;

¶C. NGO roundtable with key human rights and democracy activists;

¶D. Updated website links to key HR Day documents, including the UDHR, and distribution of UDHR and other key materials;

¶E. Commemorative receptions in collaboration with other UDHR signatories and relevant UN offices; and

¶F. Ambassador Level Op-ed using Key Messages below.

¶14. (U) Key Messages:

Universality of Human Rights

The human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are endowed at birth to all human beings. During Human Rights Week [give dates], the people of the United States will join in celebrating the Universal Declaration with men and women of every culture and creed, every race and religion, in countries large and small, developed and developing.

Over the sixty years since the Declaration's adoption on December 10, 1948, there have been remarkable gains on every continent for the rights that it enumerates. Yet, six decades on, hundreds of millions of people still are denied fundamental freedoms by their governments. Today, across the globe, men and women are working to secure the basic rights to live in dignity, to follow their consciences and speak their minds without fear, to choose those who would govern them and hold their leaders accountable, and to obtain equal justice under the law. In many countries, brave individuals who peacefully press for the rights of their fellow countrymen and women are targets of persecution and imprisonment by state authorities.

The Universal Declaration is much more than a catalogue of rights - it is a call to action. The Universal Declaration calls upon "every individual and every organ of society ... to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance..."

If the great promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to be fulfilled, the international community - and especially the world's democracies -- cannot accept that any people in the world are condemned to live without dignity or under tyranny.

As long as men and women around the globe remain deprived of their basic rights, we, who enjoy the blessings of liberty, must continue to give our sustained support to the universal cause of freedom, and to all who courageously champion it.

Defend the Defenders of Human Rights and Democratic Principles

As President Bush has said, "Freedom can be resisted, and freedom can be delayed, but freedom cannot be denied." For a while, tyrants may rule, but in the long run, those who serve and sacrifice for dignity and democracy will prevail, as the Havel and the Mandelas did before them.

Too often, today's defenders of freedom are denounced and persecuted by their own governments. Yet, in the hindsight of history, these heroes and heroines will be recognized for who they are - impatient patriots who not only inspire their fellow citizens, but whose example gives hope to people everywhere who press for the freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The growing worldwide demand for human rights and democracy is not the result of the impersonal workings of some dialectic, or of the orchestrations of foreign governments. Rather, this call derives from the powerful human desire to live in dignity and liberty, and the personal bravery and tenacity of men and women in every age and in every society who serve and sacrifice for the cause of freedom.

Democracy is the Form of Government Capable of Securing and Protecting Human Rights

We believe that democracy is the only form of government capable of securing and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms over the long term. Countries in which power is concentrated in the hands of unaccountable rulers are the world's most systematic human rights violators.

That said, no form of government is without flaws. Democracy is a system of government of, by and for the people, based on the principle that human beings have the inherent right to shape their own future. But we humans are flawed creatures and therefore there must be built-in correctives and counterweights to democratic government, such as a robust civil society, a vibrant free media, a legislature and judiciary independent of the executive power, and a well established rule of law.

US Record

The United States, like all democracies, is not perfect. Our citizens claim a proud history of striving in every generation since our nation's founding to bring our democratic practices closer to our cherished principles, even as we seek to confront the injustices and challenges of each new age.

We take all of our human rights commitments seriously, and, in our good faith efforts to meet those commitments,

we value the vital role played by civil society and independent media. We do not consider views about our performance voiced by others in the international community to be interference in our internal affairs, nor should other governments regard expressions about their performance as such.

The U.S. Government will continue to hear and reply forthrightly to concerns about our own practices, including the actions we have taken to defend our nation from the global threat of terrorism. Our laws, policies and practices have evolved considerably in recent years.

We continue to strive to protect innocent civilians from attack while honoring our longstanding commitment to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. As part of this effort, the United States submits reports to international bodies in accordance with its obligations under various human rights treaties to which it is a party.

Building vibrant democracies worldwide is the work of generations, but it is urgent work that cannot be delayed.

Our own democracy still is evolving. The United States' journey toward liberty and justice for all has been long and difficult, but we are proud that we continue to make important progress. Our independent branches of government, our free media, our openness to the world, and, most importantly, the civic courage of impatient American patriots, help us keep faith with our founding ideals and our international human rights obligations. In January, our democracy will mark an historic event - the inauguration of the first African American as President of the United States. Yet, we fully recognize that our national journey toward a more perfect union is far from complete.

Democracy's path is neither smooth nor straight, but it is sure. Along the way, there are bound to be stumbles and setbacks. Some states still have weak institutions of democratic government and continue to struggle; others have yet to fully commit to the democratic process. Steps forward can be marred with irregularities. There can be serious regressions. Democratically-elected governments do not always govern democratically once in power.

The way forward is clear: entrust citizens with greater freedom so that they can use it to correct the deficiencies that stand in the way of a hopeful future.

The Essential Contributions of Human Rights Defenders, NGOs and Independent Media

In today's world, the problems confronting states are too complex even for the most powerful to tackle alone. The contributions of civil society and the free flow of ideas and information are crucial in addressing a host of domestic and international challenges. Restricting the political space of NGOs and public debate only limits a society's own growth.

In every region of the globe, there are governments that respond to the growing demands for personal and political freedom not by accepting their obligations to their people, but by oppressing those who advocate for human rights and expose abuses, such as nongovernmental organizations and independent media, including the Internet.

For civil society and the independent media, the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly are oxygen. Without these fundamental freedoms, democracy is deprived of its life's breath. Regrettably, some governments misuse their power against NGOs, journalists, and other civil society activists.

When democracies support the work of human rights

advocates and civil society organizations, we help men and women in countries across the globe shape their own destinies in freedom. And by so doing, we help to build a safer, better world for all.

We must defend the defenders, for they are the agents of peaceful, democratic change.

Abiding U.S. Support for Human Rights and Democracy Worldwide

There is an increasing worldwide demand for greater personal and political freedom and for the adoption of democratic principles of government. The United States supports the efforts of men and women across the globe to secure and exercise their rights. Our support reflects the core values of the American people. As President Bush has said: "Freedom is the non-negotiable right of every man, woman, and child, and the path to lasting peace in our world is liberty."

Here in the United States we are in the midst of our own democratic transition to a new Administration. America's work for freedom's cause across the globe transcends our domestic politics, because the advancement of human rights and democratic principles reflects the core values of our citizens. When the Obama Administration takes office in January, this important work for human freedom will continue, strengthened by the active, bipartisan support of the Congress, in the finest tradition of the people of the United States.

Resources:

¶15. Following are a list of products posts can draw from in their public outreach and public diplomacy efforts.

¶16. The following products will be accessible through DRL's intranet site and Infocentral.

¶A. Secretarial statement at HR Day event

¶B. Presidential Proclamation

¶C. IO Fact Sheet:

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/2008/109916.htm>

¶D. Question/Answers

¶17. In addition, the full text of UDHR can be found:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.pdf>. It is also

available in 337 other languages here:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/navigate/alpha.htm>. The UN has created a special UDHR 60th Anniversary website

<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/udhr60/index.shtml>

that contains useful historical information as well as information about the UN 60th Anniversary campaign efforts that may give posts ideas for outreach activities.

¶18. Please contact Adrienne Bory (BoryAC@state.gov or 647-1442) or Karen Chen (ChenKY@state.gov or 647-4648) in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor if you have further questions. The IIP POC is Erin Hart (HartEM@State.gov or 453-8498).

¶19. Minimize considered.

RICE